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## AN OPEN LETTER.

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NO. 30 EAST SIXTY-THIRD STREET,  
NEW YORK CITY, January 29, 1886.

*To the Editor of the North American Review :*

SIR: In an article called "An Acquaintance with Grant," published in your December number, I quoted General Sherman as having said since Grant's death that "had C. F. Smith lived, Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson." I cited this speculative opinion from the highest officer in the army, thinking it would illustrate and lend interest to the general proposition I asserted concerning the effect of chance upon the soldier's career. I do not see that the speculation is injurious to General Grant, General Sherman, or anybody else. General Sherman, however, made my citation of it the subject of a correspondence with you, in consequence of which you discussed my statement in your January number, and announced that General Sherman had called on you to repudiate the sentiment attributed to him. This was followed by a letter from General Sherman to the Rev. George Morrison, dated January 12, published in the daily papers of the 16th, in which the general says: "It is utterly impossible that I could have written or spoken the words as quoted in the December number of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW," and "that I could have written the positive expression, 'that, had C. F. Smith lived, General Grant would have disappeared from history,' is an impossibility;" adding, "I am confident in good time we shall learn on what authority or hearsay this publication is based." The issue between General Sherman and me is whether or not I quoted him correctly. In your February number, for an early copy of which I thank you, General Sherman says, coupled with much personal abuse of me, that I "invented the quotation for the purpose of questioning it," and that I, "when cornered will dodge the issue."

In view of the foregoing facts I need make no apology to the public for feeling called upon to establish the validity of the quotation I made. General Sherman himself is my authority. The remark that "had C. F. Smith lived, Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson," was written with the general's hand over his signature, word for word as I gave it. That there may be no ground for misunderstanding concerning the language used and the connection in which it was employed I append a verbatim paragraph from a letter in General Sherman's handwriting dated September 6, 1885.

As intimated in General Sherman's letter to Mr. Morrison there is a marked difference between speculating "what might have been had General Grant gone to the rear and C. F. Smith fought the battle of Shiloh; what might have been had Washington accepted his warrant in the English navy," and "the positive expression that 'had C. F. Smith lived, General Grant would have disappeared from history.'" It is not my province to explain the relation between the two. Either, however, would serve the purpose with which I quoted General Sherman, namely, to illustrate the general proposition that "chance is an important factor in the race of glory," by citing the implied opinion of General Grant's especial friend that it was true at a particular stage of Grant's career.

Perhaps I ought to add that the letter from which I quoted was shown to me on account of its supposed historical value, and with no reference to the expression I quoted. Observing the fitness of that expression to the subject on which I was engaged, and having the consent of the person to whom the letter was addressed to make the citation, I did not hesitate to do so. The correspondence of which the letter is a part was between two officials—Colonel R. N. Scott and General Sherman—upon a popular subject, that implied no secrecy whatever; and the repudiation of my quotation was no doubt a surprise to Colonel Scott, as it was to me.

Please publish this note in the next number of the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*, and on account of the character and authority of the denial, use the fac-simile plate herewith for printing the extract from General Sherman's letter.

Yours truly,

JAMES B. FRY.

## EXTRACT.

Now as to Halleck-Grant, I had the highest possible opinion of Halleck's knowledge and power, and never blamed him for mistrusting Grant's ability. Had C. F. Smith lived, Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson. Smith was a strong, nervous, vigorous man when I reported to him in person at Fort Henry. . . . With great respect your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.

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As will be seen, on reading General Sherman's address in this issue, it is now unnecessary for me to comply with General Fry's request to republish in fac-simile the extract quoted. For General Sherman not only does not dispute its authenticity but has furnished for publication the entire letter to Colonel Scott, insisting, as he had done throughout, that the extract should not go on record in the REVIEW detached from the context.

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.